

Claims

1. An elastomeric bladder disposed in a vehicle seat for occupant weight estimation, the bladder comprising:

upper and lower sheets of elastomeric material peripherally welded to

5 form a closed volume containing a bladder fluid; and

a plurality of elastomeric tethers coupling said upper and lower sheets of elastomeric material within said peripheral weld that restrict separation of said sheets but that collapse when occupant loading reduces the separation between said sheets to minimize shunting of occupant weight through said bladder.

10

2. The elastomeric bladder of Figure 1, wherein at least one of said elastomeric tethers is in the form of a strip of elastomeric material, with a first end of said strip affixed to said upper sheet and a second end of said strip affixed to said lower sheet.

5

3. The elastomeric bladder of Figure 1, wherein said tethers are arranged in a uniform geometric pattern.

4. The elastomeric bladder of Figure 1, wherein said tethers are arranged in a non-uniform pattern.

5. The elastomeric bladder of Figure 1, wherein two or more of said tethers are defined by a sheet of elastomeric tether material that is selectively spot welded to said upper and lower sheets.